



Influenza-like Illness Outbreak in schools and child-care facilities

What is Influenza-Like Illness?

Influenza-like illness (ILI) is an illness with a fever of at least 100°F accompanied by cough or sore throat in the absence of a known cause. Other symptoms of influenza (flu) may be runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills, or tiredness.

What is an Influenza-Like Illness outbreak in a school or childcare facility?

- Five cases in one week in a group of individuals that are part of a common group, such as a single classroom, sports team, or after-school group, OR
- A sudden increase in cases over the normal rate.
If in doubt, consider it a possible outbreak and implement the disease control measures.

Who should I call?

Please contact your school nurse or the Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit (ESU) at 278-6503 if you have an Influenza-like Illness outbreak in your facility, or if you are concerned about an increase in illnesses of any kind. They will suggest control measures and help identify the cause of the outbreak.

What information should I collect?

When you speak to the school nurse or ESU, they will usually ask some of the questions below:

- How many people are sick? Are the ill students concentrated in one classroom or grade? Are they all part of the same group activity?
- What are their symptoms?
- Have any of the parents or students mentioned a specific diagnosis from a doctor?
- Do you know how many students are usually absent on a normal school day?
- What, if anything, have you done already to try to stop the spread of infection?

They may ask you to put this information into a “line list”, which is a list of all the people who are sick and basic information such as their ages and their symptoms. They will provide you with a template to use and guide you through the process.

Disease Control Measures

- Teach and reinforce good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette among students, children, staff, and parents. This means washing hands with soap and water, or using alcohol-based hand sanitizers if soap and water are not available, and covering nose and mouth with a disposable tissue or a sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- Make sure that adequate supplies of soap and tissues are available and that everyone has access to them.
- Encourage students and staff to keep their hands away from their eyes, nose and mouth.
- Encourage students, parents and staff to stay home when sick, until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever (such as chills, flushed appearance, or sweating) without the use of fever-reducing medicine (e.g., ibuprofen, acetaminophen).
- Contacts of ill children or staff should be advised to watch for respiratory disease signs and symptoms, especially fever, and to notify the school if these develop. In child care settings, young children should be observed for symptoms of respiratory illness.
- Anyone who gets flu-like symptoms while at school or child care should go home or to a doctor. Sick individuals should be kept away from healthy individuals until they can leave school or child care.
- Consider canceling group activities when significant numbers of participants are ill.
- Discourage sharing water bottles or other similar items.
- Ensure that frequently touched surfaces are routinely cleaned and disinfected such as desks, countertops, doorknobs, computer keyboards, phones, and toys.
- Closing the facility to clean or disinfect is not generally recommended but will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit

Continental Building, 25 Church Street, Hamilton, HM 12, Bermuda

P.O. Box HM 1195, Hamilton HM EX, Bermuda

Phone: (+1 441) 278-6503

Fax: (+1 441) 296-3283

E-mail: epidemiology@gov.bm or jdwilson@gov.bm